

Better Homes and Centers



Michigan Department of
Social Services

Conflict Resolution

Issue 34

FALL 1993

HANDLING PARENT COMPLAINTS: IS THE CUSTOMER ALWAYS RIGHT?

Linda Shapiro

Dissatisfied parents can bring a shudder to even the most confident director. No one of us enjoys hearing that our center is failing to please. Yet, the most efficiently running center with the best trained, most caring staff cannot avoid failing to satisfy everyone all of the time. And since most of us are aware that some of our staff could benefit from more training, and that our center is not perfect (yet), we see the possibility of parent complaints grow to a certainty.

We can accept that staff members occasionally have conflict, that children sometimes need help in getting along with peers, but a parent who is not satisfied with some aspect of our center? Oh no, it's the dreaded **parent complaint**.

So, a parent has complained: How does the director feel? Criticized, harried, defensive — feelings not exactly conducive to good director-parent interactions! And if the director's response is dominated by these feelings, the parent is sure to get a message that says, "Don't complain to me!" The parent then is faced with several choices:

- 1) Complain and feel uncomfortable;
- 2) Don't complain and tolerate the problem; or
- 3) Go away.

The emphasis placed on getting new enrollment in centers gives us a good clue to what choice most parents make.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Conflict is inevitable. How we respond to it, however, may determine whether it gets resolved amicably. Conflict produces tension and frustration. Responses include emotions such as anger, defensiveness, hostility, fear and stress.

When a conflict results from a consultant citing noncompliance, correction can usually be made within certain time frames established by the consultant. Most problems can be resolved with open communication about the concerns. The same goes for special investigations conducted by the Department. We don't presume guilt or innocence, but we do need to investigate. Openness and cooperation will help to greatly reduce the potential for conflict between providers and the Department.

Conflict will be minimized when providers and licensing consultants mutually respect each other's interests and concerns for the care of children in licensed day care facilities. Child Day Care Licensing staff have the same interest providers have regarding care of children. Children should be protected and every effort made to prevent serious injury or death. Also, children are entitled to fill their day care time with quality activities and experiences which will help them in their development and prepare them to be productive.

It takes a team effort to win a championship athletic event. It takes a team effort as well to provide the best possible care for children. Working through the conflict together will ultimately favor the children in care and the goals we all have for those children.



We know that most parents don't complain just to upset directors. A parent complains because there is an aspect of her experience or her child's experience which is unsatisfactory. As a consumer of the services provided by the center, she has a right to complain: in fact, she has an **obligation** to complain if those services fail to meet her expectations.

The director who understands the positive role complaints can play in improving her center will be eager to hear from parents, willing to listen sympathetically, and then willing to use what she has heard to plan a course of action for solving the problem. This eagerness and acceptance sends a clear message to the parent: "We want to hear from you; your opinion is important."

But what about the *chronic complainer*? Don't we encourage this parent to gripe about every little problem by having such an accepting attitude? Every director remembers that one parent who just couldn't be satisfied, who could always find something, no matter how trivial, to complain about. Could it be that this person had so much pent-up dissatisfaction that she had not been allowed to express freely, that every time she spoke to the director a little more leaked out?

By taking our complainer aside and allowing her to vent all her negative feelings, we would offer her relief from needing to complain so much. Perhaps there would be agreement on ways to solve the problems she perceived, or maybe even agreement that the center was not the best place for this person and her child. Whatever the outcome, the parent would have the chance to express dissatisfaction, and the director would know exactly what the parent thought of the center.

What are some ways of stimulating parents to share concerns? The most important way is having someone available to greet parents as they drop off and pick up children. Directors who are free to chat with arriving parents will often find that conversations that begin with the typical "Hi! How are you?" lead to the more important issues on parents' minds if the director appears receptive and interested, instead of being buried in bookkeeping or in the kitchen making morning snack. Of course, every director has myriad duties, but what is more important than maintaining positive open communication with her cus-

tomers? Careful use of time and delegation can free even the busiest director to attend to this responsibility.

Scheduled parent conferences can provide a good format for communication, especially if the question "And how do you feel about our center?" is built into the conference. Parent surveys can usually get even the most reticent parent to share concerns, particularly if the survey does not ask for names, just opinions. Suggestion boxes can have some benefits, too. Parent involvement activities, such as potluck suppers and back-to-school evenings, can provide a relaxed environment for parents to bring up suggestions and concerns. Whatever the methods chosen, most important is the underlying goal of encouraging parents to share observations and criticism in an open, undefensive way.

When each parent knows that we value her perceptions of the center, positive as well as negative, she will feel involved in the job we all put so much effort into: making our child care centers the very best they can possibly be. It's a big responsibility, and we can use all the help we can get!"

Excerpted from Exchange Press, Inc. P.O. Box D, Redmond, WA 98073



KEEPING IT SEPARATE

*Tami Miller
Group Day Care Provider
Genesee County*

Having a family and being a group day care provider can be challenging but also very rewarding. The benefits include being able to watch my daughters grow, creating a stimulating learning environment for them, and choosing the people that influence their lives. But I have had to learn to separate these two parts of my life — the day care and my family. By keeping the day care separate, it has helped my family to have some privacy and helps me keep the day care and family separate after business hours.

The three key ingredients to the success of my business are:

- 1) business is done on business time
- 2) separating the day care space from the space in my home
- 3) having a staff of three

My husband plays a very important role in the day care. He is very supportive and we have worked together to make the business successful. The added wear and tear on our home increases the need for maintenance. He also takes care of snow removal and yard work. These tasks are very important because the outside appearance of our home reflects the inside. At times, my husband has assisted in day care at the end of the day, done grocery shopping, taxes and payroll as well as fixed toys. This is a side of the day care that parents and other people don't see.

The day care has played an important part in our children's lives. When both of my daughters were infants I didn't enroll any other infants. I'm pleased that I was able to work full time and still play a vital role in the early years of their development. Today my daughters are seven and four. They are very good about expressing their feelings about the day care. Occasionally what my daughters may have to say I don't especially like to hear. Sometimes my youngest daughter doesn't want to join the day care children in the morning. I allow her to watch T.V. or eat breakfast at "home." If they are sick, I also have the flexibility to be with them.

When my oldest daughter started school I was able to adjust my day care work schedule so that I could work in her classroom one afternoon a week. We both really enjoyed that as she has grown, I have given her small tasks that help make her feel needed when she comes home from school. These include serving snack, helping the younger children with art projects, or reading stories.

I also use her bedroom at nap time for one of the younger children. We came to an agreement about using her room. The infant bed must be put away before she gets home from school and the day care rents her room on a monthly basis. I felt this kind of agreement was important because it is her room and this assures her of her own space.

My children and the day care children have always been treated equally. The same rules apply to my children and the day care children. For example: my children may not bring toys to day care and they eat the same meals as the other children. The personality differences between children must be considered when they become part of a group. I don't expect my children to get along with the day care children all the time — kids will be kids.

It is important to do activities as a family. We try to plan something each weekend. Twice a year the day care is closed for vacation (Christmas time and in July). This time is important because it gives our family time together.

The closing time of day care is very important. I have established a closing time and stick to it. When day care parents are late it interferes with my family time.

We also have established some family rules for day care. They are: Everyone is dressed before going to day care; we don't eat dinner until the day care is closed; my daughters go "home" at 5:00 p.m. to allow me to close day care and talk to parents.

One more important area for success is you! Exercise, eat healthy foods, pamper yourself and decide on working hours and stick to them. Delegate some duties to others. Involve yourself in professional organizations.

Being a mom, wife, and a group day care provider is not always easy. Organization has made my job a lot easier and more enjoyable. At this point in my life, I wouldn't trade my position for anything.

CHANGING HATS

*Janna Hudson, Director
Holy Redeemer Early Learning Center
Flint*

In September I started as the new director for a large church sponsored center. The previous director had worn all the hats — preschool teacher, director, and business manager. When I accepted the position as director, the position of business manager had already been filled and I was directed to hire a preschool teacher. I could focus on being a director!

The center had not had a change of directors in a long time and the staff had been stable. They had established routines and were used to working together with the former director.

The relationship with the staff was pretty rocky from the beginning. I started with a lot of enthusiasm for my new job and had a list of all the changes I wanted to make. When I started to implement my ideas, our problems started. There were misunderstandings about ratio and scheduling. Rumors abounded about what I was doing and the parents began questioning my decisions also.

Finally the staff decided to call licensing about some of their concerns. Our consultant came to visit the center and was very reassuring. Her support came at a time when I felt discouraged and needed some validation for what I was trying to accomplish.

It is now later in the year and things are running smoothly. I can't say it has been easy — management never is — but things are much better now. I do know I would do some things differently. For one thing I would spend more time getting to know the staff. Secondly, I would not try to implement all my new ideas at once.

I did do some things that seemed to help our transition. When things were rough, I had a meeting for staff where they could ask any and all questions about their concerns. I also started sending out weekly staff newsletters after the coordinator meetings so that everyone would know what was being discussed and would feel like part of the process.

Recently we instituted an award for the best decorated wall in the hallway. The winner is chosen once a

month and receives a gift. The result has been much enthusiasm and cooperation as well as an interesting and colorful hallway.

Although it has been a rocky road at times, I have learned so much and feel very fortunate to be a part of the center!

Call for Proposal

Families in Partnership with Child Care Professionals Conference

Seeking - A broad spectrum of presenters and topics on children's issues including: Child care, activities, early assessment, educational readiness, prevention, parenting, non-traditional families, bias awareness, legislative issues, health, abuse & neglect.

Workshops - One (1) hour in length with possibility of two (2) hours. Format may be didactic, discussion, panel, hands-on.

Where: Central Michigan University

When: April 23, 1994

Deadline for Proposals: December 1, 1993

Submit to:

Child Advocacy 4C of Central Michigan
150 W. Center St.
Alma, Michigan 48801-2266
(517) 463-1422 or 1 (800) 552-4489

RESOLVING STAFF CONFLICT

Pat Sargent

Licensing Consultant Wayne County

As program directors begin their jobs, they expect their days will be spent working with children, collecting tuition, scheduling staff, and other responsibilities. Most underestimate how much of the time they will be called upon to resolve staff conflicts.

As a novice program director with a new Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education, I had been pumped full of Piaget but was sadly lacking in personnel management training.

In early childhood settings people come to their jobs with a variety of backgrounds. Most are very nurturing people and when a conflict arises with a coworker they want the situation fixed but usually aren't inclined to deal with the other person directly. The same people who teach children to "Use your words to tell your friend how that makes you feel" are reluctant to use their own. Often the problem then lands in the director's lap.

Initially I listened to whatever the complaint was and would go to the other person and try to communicate the problem as I had heard it. I then listened to that person's view of the conflict. This procedure resulted in a lot of "I didn't say that but she said..." and very little conflict resolution. As a program director I needed to understand what role I should play in these situations. I needed to determine when my intervention was really needed and when the problem was best handled by the people directly involved.

Over time I developed policies for dealing with staff conflicts that seemed to work for all of us. If a problem had an impact on the health and safety of the children, I would intervene directly. However, most staff conflict involved those situations where one person felt dumped on by another whom she perceived as not doing her share. In those cases I learned that my role should be limited to helping the person clarify for herself what the complaint was and urging her to be assertive enough to approach her coworker. If she chose not to carry through, the alternative was to go on putting up with the frustrating behavior.

I was not willing to be the fixer of all problems, but I was willing to be present when the two met to keep them focused on the issues. Each person was urged to state the problem as she saw it and tell the other what she felt needed to happen.

Initially they almost always wanted my presence. Gradually we got to the point where I heard about most situations only after they had come to a solution that was satisfactory to both parties.

Over time, we all became aware that resolving conflict did not have to be a negative experience. If one staff member approached another early in a situation and talked simply about the problem without attacking the person a resolution could usually be reached without too many hurt feelings. In essence, we learned that the principles we taught the children about dealing with conflict do work — no matter what your age.



DEFINING THE ROLES

*Suzanne Workman-Dupuis, Director
Telamon Corporation
Ingham County*

The relationship between the board, the director and other staff is critical to the success of the agency. It is important that the relationship be a cooperative rather than an adversarial one.

In nonprofit agencies, the board is often made up of volunteers with and without administrative experience. The Board of Directors is legally responsible for the organization and has the responsibilities of carrying out the duties in accordance with the law, their bylaws, and funding agreements. The board hires the director to carry out day-to-day activities, to run the agency and to carry out the program. While it may delegate a level of authority to the director, the board still holds a duty to monitor the actions of those to whom authority is delegated.

The director is responsible for managing the organization. She relies on the board for guidance and direction overall.

One strategy for ensuring a cooperative relationship is to clearly define the separate roles of board and staff. The need for a cooperative relationship also needs to be outlined in the board bylaws, the job descriptions, and the overall philosophy of the agency. It is wise for the board and director to develop a plan by which the board can get information it needs to make careful decisions. This will avoid interfering with the day-to-day operation of the organization or undermining the authority of the director.

While conflict often develops when roles are not defined and communication breaks down, the first step in resolving the problem may be found in identifying and communicating what the problem is. This may be more comfortable to do one-on-one, in committee or in written form, but should be addressed as the conflicts arise. Don't wait until it becomes an all out war! The director should indicate how the conflict is affecting her ability to perform her duties and how this affects the agency overall. If possible, it should include some solutions. If the agency has a conflict resolution procedure, it should be followed.

Some easy solutions to avoid or resolve Board/staff conflict may include:

- Have job descriptions written up not only for staff but for board members as well.
- Clearly define the reporting requirements up and down the chain of command, for example: regular reports from the director, minutes from committee and board meetings, monthly financial reports.
- Develop a plan where the board can access information needed to make informed decisions while respecting the director's position and authority.
- Establish a conflict resolution or grievance procedure with instructions on handling impasse situations.
- Realize that if conflict does exist between board and staff, the board has the right to retain a special advisor or consultant to resolve the issues. This should be used only after other attempts have been made to resolve the problem.



BRIDGE THE GAP

*Sally Keverey, Director
Westminster Child Development Center
Kent County*

You've known about it for months. The main topic around the church has been the "renovation project." You direct the child care center that is one of several ministries housed in a facility with expanding needs.

Renovation of the building is the remedy, but it begins as a headache. The plan has been changed, discussed, reformulated so many times, it is hard to remember exactly what comes first and what follows. Information has flowed through the proper channels on the scope of the project, but not on its possible impact on the center. The best time for conflict resolution has already passed.

The monumental Monday morning is upon you. Renovation work has begun. Yes, there is to be a new roof, but no one mentioned that the shingles from the old one would come cascading down on your playground, making it off limits for ... how long? And what about the painters, chipping and sandblasting at the exterior of the building forcing you to close windows? The first week of your summer program is beginning to look like a bad dream.

Many non-profit child care centers are owned and operated by churches and private service agencies. The administrative structure of these centers usually includes a board of directors. The board functions as a policy-making body. Generally made up of volunteers, it oversees the operation of the center, providing guidance and direction for the paid staff who are involved in the daily operation of the center.

A church renovation is designed to serve the changing needs of the entire congregation, not one small part of it.

If the child care center has been functioning efficiently and adapting to existing space, its ongoing needs may not have been adequately communicated to the higher decision-making body, such as the church governing board, that is formulating the master plan. This can happen in spite of all good intentions on the part of the child care board. The key ingredient that is lacking here is communication.

Growth, changes in ministry or change of any kind can threaten the status quo. When buildings change, center staff and children need to adapt both temporarily and permanently. Routines are disrupted, and there is the potential for conflict. Licensing rules, fire regulations, and the best possible outcome for the center are at the forefront of all discussion among staff and parents. While the question of what all this means to the center and to the safety and well-being of the children is going on constantly at this level, it may not be being adequately discussed higher up the ladder where it can be communicated to architects, contractors and builders.

An effective relationship must be built between the center's director and its board. That relationship is best established by clear and friendly communication. Relying on the regular monthly meeting is not enough. An ongoing channel of communication between director and key board members is a must.

The trick becomes one of keeping those important child care center issues before the decision-making body throughout the project, all the while presenting the center as a co-operative entity in this major undertaking.

Directors can effectively present the needs of the center in written reports. Serving both as a statement of current needs and as an historical record, the written report underlines the importance of the issue under discussion while serving as a reference document.

Members of the child care board usually include a broad range of professionals whose experience can be brought to bear on the practical problems faced by the center. Ideally the board will include a member of the team with intimate knowledge of, and direct contact with the higher church governing board, enabling a clear advocacy relationship to develop. In the challenge faced by the renovation, a board member with experience in architecture or the building trades might be beneficial, but the main advocate must be an assertive person with communication skills.

(Continued on pg. 11)

CONFLICT NEGOTIATION: GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

*By Kit Payne, Teacher
Child Development Laboratories
Michigan State University*

In my work with children between the ages of two and six, I have served as "chief negotiator" for countless social conflicts. Children in this age range are confronted, time after time, with that age-old desire to have the other person's toy or the other person's space for themselves. The skills that children need to gain what they want, in a way that's acceptable to the mini-society of home, center or preschool, should be introduced from the first day that they find themselves in a group setting. Let's start with the ability to choose and the growing awareness of the right to do so.

1. Help children gain experience in making choices:

- a. Begin with simple choices: "Do you want blue paper or red paper?"
- b. Add more options as children gain experience: "You can play at the sandbox, the slide, or the swings."
- c. Ask children with experience to name their own options: "Tell me three areas you're thinking of starting in today ... now, choose one."
- d. Use the language of choice to help make the process apparent: "You can have crackers or raisins ... you have a choice." "You can choose between blocks and easel painting."

2. Help children build a tool kit for resolving conflicts?

- a. Model and explain trading one toy for another, mentioning that the child can trade back later, if one child seems particularly reluctant to part with a favorite toy.
- b. Suggest that children find ways to use a toy together: "You both want to build with these blocks? Jamie can bring blocks from the shelf while Robin stacks them this time, then Robin can be the retriever while Jamie has a turn stacking." Or, "You both chose the counting bears to use. I notice there are lots of bears. Here are two baskets. You

can divide them up so each of you has a share. Ask me to help if you can't decide how to divide them."

- c. State the guidelines for sharing, then allow children choices within the guidelines: "Kelly wants a truck, also. You have two trucks, you can decide which one to give Kelly — both of you get a chance to play with trucks when we have more than one."

3. Model Conflict Resolution.

Use puppets or dolls to act out a script: Have characters argue over a matter. Encourage children to suggest alternative solutions to the conflict. Model what might happen if various solutions are implemented. Invite children to discuss and summarize the merits of various solutions and to choose the best ones:

Bert is playing with a hat. Ernie sees it and wants to use it too, so he comes over and grabs it.

TEACHER: How do you think Bert feels? What could he say?

CHILD 1: Bert could say "That's mine!"

TEACHER: Let's try that and see what happens.

BERT: That's mine!

ERNIE: I want it!

TEACHER: What else could Ernie say?

CHILD 2: Ernie should say "I want a turn."

TEACHER: We'll try that now.

ERNIE: I want a turn.

BERT: I'm not done yet.

ERNIE: Well, can I have it when you're done?

BERT: O.K.

TEACHER: Tell me which way worked best?

4. Be a facilitator while children resolve conflicts:

- a. Help children clarify what happened: "Martin, you knocked over Jati's block structure. You like to see the blocks fall down. Jati, how did that make you feel? Tell Martin."

(Continued on pg. 10)

"GEORGE IS DRIVING ME UP THE WALL TODAY"

*Kathy Spitzley
Group Home Provider
Ottawa County*

Everyone has a bad day or gets up on the wrong side of the bed, both staff and children. Because our staff operates as a team, I let the others know when I'm facing an "off" day. "I'm not 100% today", I tell Jan. Children in a similar situation also exhibit diminished tolerance. After three high pitched yells within the first fifteen minutes, I'm alert for trouble.

If that trouble comes between my teammate and the child, my first impulse is to step back, to observe for a minute. I may offer a strategy to the other adult; if it seems appropriate. Certainly I will be more aware of this potential stress and may, with permission, initiate an interaction with the child soon after the conflict.

Conflicts between adults and children are discussed at our daily staff meetings. One only needs to say, "George is driving me up the wall today," and the other two are ready to assist. When others are having the same problem, we try to think about what could be happening to the child. We create strategies to turn the situation positive, leaving final choices to individual staff. Recently I observed George spitting on someone below the climber. It seemed the kind of morning when I was continually correcting his behavior and I became annoyed. I wanted to send him inside for the rest of the day! But that was just what he didn't need. George sat aside while I spoke to my teammate, and for a moment we focused on what George was doing well. This was enough to give me some ideas and renew my energy. George and I had a more friendly chat than I had anticipated. My teammate initiated some interactions with George and confirmed at our staff meeting that his day was going much better.

It is difficult for adults to admit that we are not dealing well with a particular child. The process of building a team insures that adults deal with a conflict situation in a similar manner. As I interview a prospective employee, we discuss conflict management strategies. The first months of a new caregiver's employment necessitate my constant obser-

vation. If I ever felt that a child's safety was threatened, I would intervene immediately and discuss the situation later.

Sometimes adults cannot admit that a particular child bugs them, or is not their favorite. Observation/feedback strategies help adults see what is really going on. Staff at the Good Times take turns observing each other. We focus on an individual child with a group, recording her language and actions as well as the adult's language and actions. All observations are factual and non-judgmental. With staff permission, we even videotape interactions and discuss them later.

(Continued on pg. 10)



(Conflict Negotiation...
Continued from page 8)

- b. Ask children to generate more acceptable alternatives: "Martin, when do you think it's o.k. to knock blocks down? What do you think, Jati?"
 - c. Summarize the ideas: "Martin thinks it's o.k. to _____; Jati thinks that _____". Continue with this process until children come up with a mutually satisfactory plan.
 - d. Have the children test the plan. Praise their efforts and evaluate the merits of the new strategy.
- 5. Other hints for success:**
- a. Keep empty boxes, trays and baskets available on shelves to ease the division of materials and to provide boundaries around each child's share.
 - b. Provide cooking timers or hour glasses to help children keep track of turns.
 - c. Provide paper and pencil to keep a list of who is waiting for a turn. Help waiting children to locate their own names on the list and to count the number of names before theirs.
 - d. Provide children with words and statements that ease conflict negotiations:
 - Ben, tell Marie "It's my turn," (instead of "ask him for a turn").
 - Nacko, say "stop" when Jessie is pushing you.
 - Tell Lizzie "I want to use it next."



(George...
Continued from page 9)

What happens when a child prefers one adult over another? When a regular family child care provider works alone, she is the sole comforter for children during their child care hours. When other staff or substitutes work with children, providers need to share the children's affections. Recently enrolled twins chose the youngest member of our team as their comfort person. They would not acknowledge anyone else. Initially, I'm sure, Jan and I felt a twinge of rejection. Simultaneously we were thrilled that they found comfort with Shana. This security eventually facilitated the twin's participation in our program. But as adults, it is never easy to be the "rejected" one. Conflicts happen when adults are unable to encourage and respect children's choices.

For me the miraculous ingredient of conflict management is our daily staff meeting. Our agenda remains the same. First we talk about children and specific recorded observations. Next we deal with what children will be doing the coming afternoon and next morning. Finally, we deal with any other management issues relating to child care. This is the drawing board where I begin to analyze my conflicts with specific children, encouraging my teammates to do the same. The strategies discussed consider the best interests of a particular child and are limited only by our combined experiences and creativity. Such discussions facilitate our ability as a team, to manage potential conflict situations.

In conclusion, I do not presume to direct my teammates. Among the three of us we combine twenty-two years of early childhood educational experiences. Still conflicts will occur between adults and children. As caregivers we need to manage them, so that both children and adults learn from each other; and most importantly, so that these children become adults who manage conflicts.

Editorial Staff

Judy Gaspar	Licensing Consultant
Tina Marks	Licensing Consultant
Sandra Settergren	Licensing Consultant
Lynn Smith	Licensing Consultant
Carole Grates	Licensing Supervisor
Judy Levine	Licensing Supervisor
Sheila Linderman	Illustrator

The renovation experience may be extreme, and beyond the experience of many in child care management. More often the conflict is over minor issues.

Directors need to be able to establish themselves with their respective boards as knowledgeable in the field of child care. Presenting detailed information about the program and its needs and, from a personal perspective, allowing the board members to really know the director, encourages confidence on the part of the board and allows it to support the director and the center staff. Making the board aware of the day-to-day operation of the center — its ups and downs, triumphs and tragedies — builds links with the board and the center.

The child care board should actively intervene with the church board when conflict occurs. Sometimes the interests of the center and those of the church are at odds. It becomes important for the board and the director to agree on a positive course of action in order for needs to be met on all sides.

Diplomatically promoting the interests of the center to the church-board can assure that the center's needs are met. At the same time, the church board can enjoy the feeling of pride and accomplishment in its support of the well run center. The key seems to be to build bridges — with information, diplomacy, and knowing what the goals are.



RESOURCES

1. *A Great Place To Work: Improving Conditions For Staff In Young Children's Programs* - Paula Jorde-Bloom, NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009-5786, 1988.
2. *Character Development: Encouraging Self-Esteem And Self Discipline In Infants, Toddlers And Two's* - Polly Greenberg, NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009-5786, 1991.
3. *Developing Minds - A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*, Edited by Arthur L. Costa, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
4. *Growing Teachers: Partnerships In Staff Development* - NAEYC, 1993.
5. *Handling Parent Complaints: Is The Customer Always Right?* - Child Care Information Exchange, August 1984.
6. *Help Me — I'm Growing Up!* - Understanding Early Adolescents Resources, 4-H Youth Programs, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University.
7. *Higher Order Thinking: Definition, Meaning and Instructional Approaches* - Ruth G. Thomas, Editor, Home Economics Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth St, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.
8. *How To Deal With Difficult People* - Paul Frokman, Skillpath Publications, 1991.
9. *Supervision In Early Childhood Education: A Developmental Perspective* - Joseph J. Caruso and M. Temple Fawcett, Teachers College Press, 1986.
10. *Teacher-Parent Relationships* - Jeannette Galambos Stone, NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009-5786, 1987.

PROVIDER'S CORNER

LOOK-ALIKE LIQUIDS POSE POISONING HAZARDS

*Audrey Bassett
Greater Flint/Thumb Area
4-C Association*

New marketing strategies for beverages present a safety hazard because the drinks can be easily confused with toxic liquids. Children are particularly at risk.

Various beverages (including Kool-Aid, Hawaiian Punch, Hi C and Gatorade) now come in attractive bright colors such as blue and green. Often they are packaged in plastic.

Although the drinks are safe, they resemble anti-freeze, windshield washer solution and window cleaner, all of which are hazardous if consumed. One swallow of antifreeze containing ethylene glycol alcohol can kill a child under 6, according to the Regional Poison Control Center at Children's Hospital of Michigan.

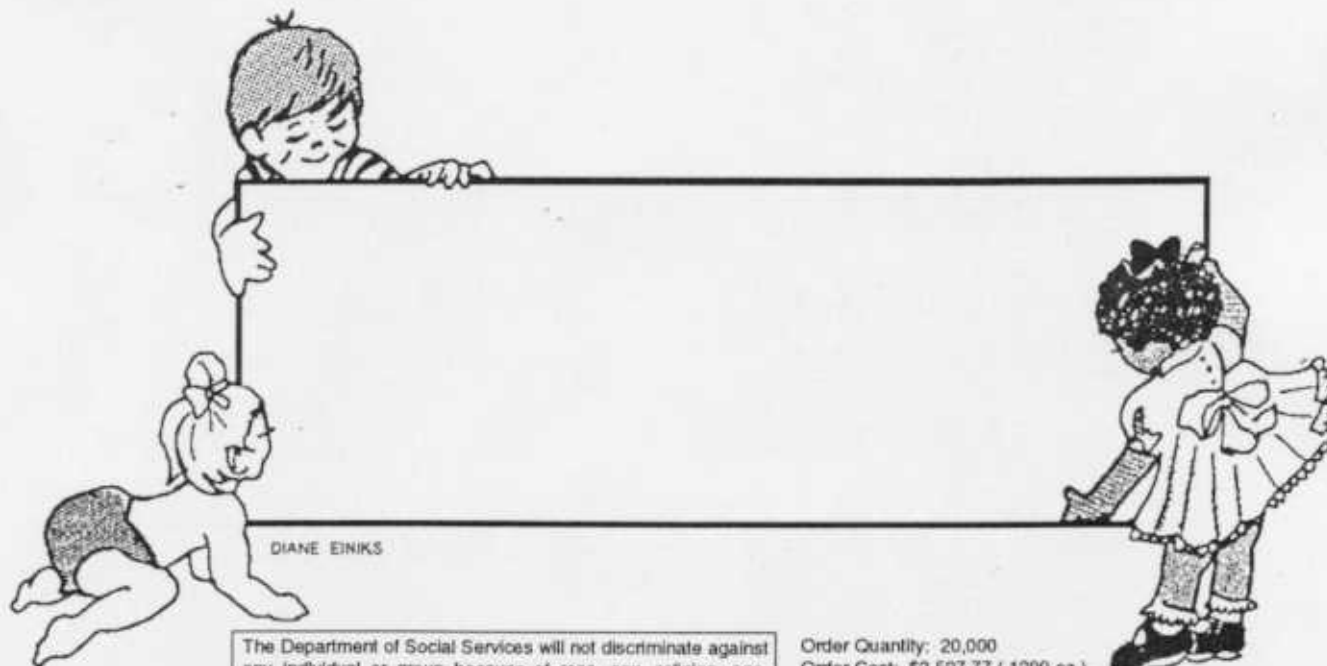
To compound the potential dangers, a variety of products now come in clear liquids: furniture polishes and other toxic items, as well as soft drinks.

It is more important than ever to follow these basic safety rules:

- Teach children never to eat or drink anything without an adult's approval.
- Keep poisonous substances out of children's reach, preferably under lock and key.
- Keep all poisonous items in their original, clearly labeled containers.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
BUREAU OF REGULATORY SERVICES
235 S GRAND AVE
PO BOX 30037
LANSING MI 48909

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Lansing, Michigan
Permit No. 1200



DIANE EINIKS

The Department of Social Services will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, disability or political beliefs.

Order Quantity: 20,000
Order Cost: \$2,597.77 (.1299 ea.)
Approval: MDSS Director